

Questions and Answers about exportation and importation under organic equivalency recognition between Canada and Japan

On September 17, 2014, Canada and Japan agreed to an organic equivalency recognition which was enforced on January 1, 2015. This recognition was updated in July 2020 to include an expanded scope of livestock and processed products containing livestock. The outline of this mutual recognition is shown as follows.

Q1. Canada has a “mutual equivalence recognition” with Japan. What does this mean?

A1. This means that as long as the terms of the recognition are met, Canadian and Japanese organic products certified to the Canadian Organic Standards or Japanese Agricultural Standards (JAS) may be sold, labeled, and represented as organic in both countries. As long as the product is certified by a CFIA-accredited or Japan-accredited certification body, this recognition facilitates access to each country’s organic market.

Q2. Does Japan accept the Canada organic logo? Does Canada accept Japan’s organic logo?

A2. Yes. As a result of the equivalency recognition, either organic logo may be used on products traded under the recognition. Products traded under the recognition must meet the labeling requirements in the destination country.

Labeling requirements of Canada are shown here: <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/food/labelling/food-labelling-for-industry/organic-claims/eng/1389725994094/1389726052482>

Labeling requirements of Japan are shown here:

https://www.maff.go.jp/e/policies/standard/specific/organic_JAS.html#Organic%20Standards

Q3. Can products sold in both Canada and Japan be attached both “Canada organic logo” and “organic JAS logo”?

A3. The equivalency recognition was determined subject to trading between Canada and Japan for promoting trade between two countries.

Therefore, attaching the organic logos of an organic equivalent country to products which aren’t exported to the organic equivalent country is contrary to the aim of the equivalency recognition. Furthermore, there is a risk of misleading the consumers etc. as if the products were certified to both Japanese organic standard and Canadian organic standard. So please don’t attach the logos of organic equivalent country to products which aren’t exported to the organic equivalent country.

Q4. Which products can be traded under the equivalency recognition?

A4. The recognition includes:

- a) Plants, including fungi
- b) Plant-based processed products (food and beverage only)
- c) Livestock products (limited to the JAS organic specified scope of livestock)
- d) Processed food products containing livestock ingredients (limited to the JAS organic specified scope of livestock)

These are:

(1) Produced within Canada or Japan or (2) Whose final processing or packaging occurs within Canada or Japan.

(2) Organic JAS/Canadian Organic certified products which are produced in third country and whose packaging or labeling occurs within Canada or Japan.

Reference: https://www.maff.go.jp/e/policies/standard/jas/specific/diagram_Canada_Japan.pdf

Q5. What happens if an organic operation or certification body violates the terms of the recognition?

A5. Significant non-compliances will be reported to both countries and appropriate enforcement actions may be pursued under the respective country's regulations.

Shipping Canadian organic products from Canada to Japan under the recognition

Q6. What is required to ship Canadian organic products to Japan?

A6. Products must be certified to the Canadian organic standards, and must be imported by JAS certified importer. Furthermore, products must meet all Japanese organic labeling requirements (including compliant use of the JAS organic logo).

Q7. Which products may carry the JAS organic logo?

A7. The following categories:

- a) Plants, including fungi
- b) Plant-based processed products (food and beverage only)
- c) Livestock products (limited to the JAS organic specified scope of livestock)
- d) Processed food products containing livestock ingredients (limited to the JAS organic specified scope of livestock)

The above products certified organic under CAN/CGSB-32.310 must be labeled with the JAS organic logo under this recognition if they are sold as organic in Japan.

Products which are not covered under the scope of the recognition cannot be labeled with the JAS organic logo. This includes both products which don't have JAS organic standard (e.g. alcoholic beverage, honey) and those which do have voluntary JAS organic standard (e.g. feed). Please see Q11, Q12 and Q13 for more information.

Q8. How can a Canadian operation apply the JAS organic logo to their products?

A8. Under the Canada Organic Regime, the use of the Canada organic logo is not mandatory. On the other hand, any plants, including fungi, plant-based processed products, livestock products and processed food products containing livestock ingredients (limited to the JAS organic specified scope of livestock) sold or labeled as organic in Japan must be labeled with the JAS organic logo (*). These products must be imported by a JAS-certified importer. Under the recognition, the JAS organic logo may be applied using one of two methods:

*: The labeling regulations for organic livestock products and processed food containing livestock ingredients will come into effect of July 16, 2020.

Method 1. If a Canadian-based farm or business wishes to apply the JAS organic logo to their products in Canada, they must have a contract with a JAS-certified importer. Then, the Canada-based farm or business can apply the JAS organic logo in Canada and export it to the JAS-certified importer.

Method 2. If a Canadian-based farm or business doesn't wish to apply the JAS organic logo to their product in Canada, a JAS-certified importer must apply the logo to the product once it arrives in Japan.

Q 9 . What documentation is required for products traded under the recognition?

A 9 . All organic plants, including fungi, plant-based processed products, livestock products and processed food products containing livestock ingredients (limited to the JAS organic specified scope of livestock) exported from Canada to Japan must be accompanied by an Export certificate. It is used to document the production location, identify the certification body, certify that the terms of the partnership were met, and allow traded products to be tracked. View the Export certificate for Canadian organic products and instructions which can be found here

Export certificate for Canadian organic products to Japan:

<https://www.inspection.gc.ca/organic-products/equivalence-arrangements/japan-overview/eng/1411058101057/1411058102166>

Instructions for Completing a Certificate: <https://www.inspection.gc.ca/organic-products/equivalence-arrangements/japan-overview/eng/1411058101057/1411058102166>

Q10. How do Canadian operations obtain an Export certificate for Japan?

A10. CFIA (Canadian Food Inspection Agency) will be responsible to share with the CFIA accredited Certification bodies copy of the Export certificate template and the instructions for completion.

View the export certificate for Canadian organic products to Japan and instructions which can be found here
Export certificate for Canadian organic products to Japan

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Shipping Canadian organic products from Canada to Japan NOT covered under the scope of the recognition

Q11. If the Canadian certified organic feed is imported, how it is handled in Japan?

A11. There are standards for organic feed in Japan and Canada, but organic feed is outside the scope of the recognition.

For organic livestock under JAS, it is only possible to use organic feed from equivalent countries when it is difficult to obtain organic feed certified under JAS.

In the above case, an export certificate issued by a CFIA accredited certification body is required.

Japanese agricultural standards for organic feed:

https://www.maff.go.jp/e/policies/standard/specific/organic_JAS.html#Organic%20Standards

Q12. What are the points to note when importing alcoholic beverages?

A12. There is no standard for organic alcoholic beverages in Japan. Therefore, organic alcoholic beverages are outside the scope of the recognition. However, alcoholic beverages labeled with the word “organic” in the Japanese language must be accompanied by an **organic certificate** that includes the name of the certified alcoholic beverage, the name and the address of the certified farm or brewery, the number and date of certification, the address and name of the operator, the country of origin, and the address and name of the certification body.

Q13. What are the points to note when importing Canadian organic certified products that are not covered under organic JAS?

A13. In the case of importing products under the recognition, the importer must be a JAS-certified importer. On the other hand, when importing products that are outside the scope of the recognition, the importer doesn't need to be a JAS-certified importer under the organic JAS system.

The organic JAS logo cannot be attached to the following items.

- Alcoholic beverages
Please refer to Q12 for more information.
- Organic products under Canadian standard CAN/CGSB-32.312

These products (e.g. organic plant products, organic livestock products limited to the specified scope of the livestock by organic JAS, and organic processed foods) are outside the scope of the recognition cannot be labeled “organic”

Shipping JAS organic products to Canada under the recognition

Q14. What kind of products can be exported to Canada? What is required to ship JAS-eligible organic products to Canada?

A14. All JAS certified organic plants, including fungi, plant-based processed products, livestock products and processed food products containing livestock ingredients (limited to the JAS organic specified scope of livestock) that were produced within Japan or products whose final processing or packaging occurs within Japan can be exported under this recognition. All JAS certified ingredients can be used in processed products no matter where its country of origin is. Also, organic products which are imported by the certified importer from the third country whose organic system is regarded as equivalent as the Organic JAS System and are re-packed by a certified re-packer can be exported under this recognition. Furthermore, the product must meet all Canadian organic labeling requirements (including compliant use of the Canadian organic logo) and be accompanied with the organic certificate signed by the JAS accredited Certification Body.

Q15. Can plants including fungi, plant-based processed products and processed food products containing livestock ingredients (limited to the JAS organic specified scope of livestock) produced in Japan in conversion to organic be traded under this recognition?

A15. Canada doesn't have a “transition to organic” labeling category like Japan does. Therefore, plants including fungi, plant-based processed products and processed food products containing livestock ingredients (limited to the JAS organic specified scope of livestock) in conversion to organic can't be exported to Canada under the terms of this recognition.

Q16. Can organic products produced outside of Japan be exported to Canada under this recognition?

A16. In order to be exported to Canada under this recognition, Japanese organic products must be produced within Japan or have their final processing or packaging occur within Japan.

Q17. How do JAS operators obtain an organic certificate needed to export organic products to Canada?

A17. To start, JAS operations should inform their certification body that they wish to ship products to Canada. The certification body will ask the operator: “whether organic plants including fungi, processed food of plant origin, livestock products and processed food products containing livestock ingredients (limited to the JAS organic specified scope of livestock) are certified in Organic JAS System”, “whether these products are produced or packaged in Japan”, “whether the products’ labeling meets all of the Canadian organic labeling requirements” etc. Then, the certification body will issue the certificate. All of the organic JAS Accredited Certification Bodies can issue organic certificates needed to export organic products to Canada.

https://www.maff.go.jp/e/policies/standard/specific/Organic_CB_domestic.pdf

The JAS Accredited Certification Bodies have to complete the following export certificate. Please find the Export Certificate from following address.

https://www.maff.go.jp/j/jas/jas_kikaku/export_certificate_Canada.pdf

Instructions for Completing the Certificate:

https://www.maff.go.jp/j/jas/jas_kikaku/instructions_export_Canada.pdf

Shipping organic products from Japan to Canada NOT under the recognition

Q18. How can products which don't have JAS organic standard be displayed or sold as organic in Canada?

A18. Products which don't have JAS organic standard such as honey and alcoholic beverages sold as organic in Canada, must be certified to the Canadian Organic Standards by a CFIA accredited certification body.

About the effective date of Organic Equivalency for organic livestock and organic processed food products containing livestock ingredients

Q19. What effective date, July 16, 2020 mean? Can products which are produced before July 16 , 2020, be exported/imported under this recognition?

A19. Under the Japan - Canada equivalency recognition for organic livestock and organic processed food products containing livestock ingredients, export certificates can only be issued on or after July 16, 2020 when the recognition is enforced.

Organic products produced before the recognition's effective date can be exported under the equivalency recognition on or after the effective date of the equivalency recognition as long as they are accompanied by a valid Export certificate. During the first two months of the recognition, Export certificates for organic livestock and organic processed food products containing livestock ingredients under the equivalency recognition could be issued to products exported before the effective date as long as they arrive in Japan or Canada on or after the recognition's effective date.

The use of JAS certified ingredients for Canadian organic product in Japan

Q20. Can Japanese operators use JAS certified ingredients in organic products certified to the Canadian organic standard by CFIA accredited Certification Bodies, such as organic alcoholic drinks, organic processed foods or the products which are labeled as "made with organic"?

A20. All JAS certified organic plants, including fungi, plant-based processed products, livestock products and processed food products containing livestock ingredients (limited to the JAS organic specified scope of livestock) that were produced within Japan or products whose final processing or packaging occurs within Japan can be used as ingredients for organic products certified to the Canadian Organic Standard by CFIA accredited Certification Bodies.

Q21. From when can COR certified operators in Japan use JAS certified ingredient as the ingredient for Canadian organic product?

A21. From July 16, 2020 for livestock products and processed food products containing livestock ingredients (limited to the JAS organic specified scope of livestock).